

ULTRAMAN FLIES ACROSS THE PACIFIC

The silvery skin-tight giant finally comes to the U.S. for his domestically produced debut on the American sci-fi small screen.

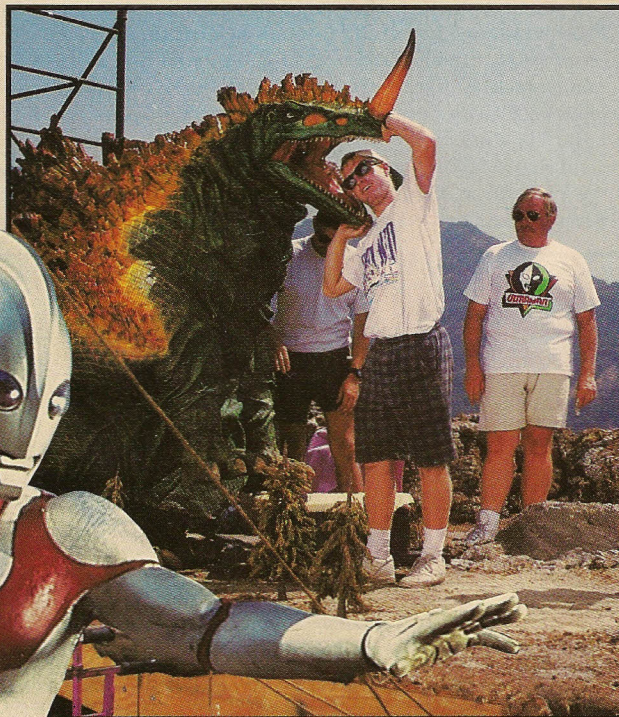
On July 17, 1966, a legend was born. A 300-foot-tall superhero dressed in red and silver skin-tight leather with a glowing and goggled silver helmet appeared for the first time on Japanese television. He was called *Urotoraman*. The brain child of Eiji Tsuburaya, the same guy who created Godzilla, *Urotoraman* was the first Japanese color TV show for children. Running a total of 39 episodes, *Urotoraman* spawned a series of toys, comics, clothing, silverware and school supplies, a product line that rivals those of *Star Wars* and *Jurassic Park*. Eventually, *Urotoraman* spawned other TV shows including *Ultra Seven*, *The Return of Urotoraman* and *Urotoraman Ace*. In the '70s, the series was dubbed

from deadly monsters attacking from the depths of space. Ultraman himself is played by stuntman Scott Rogers, who is probably one of the sweatiest guys in TV land. Shooting in the ultraheat of the San Fernando Valley, Rogers had to change costumes about four times a day due to the sweat build-up inside his rubber costume. The producers could tell it was time for him to change when they noticed sweat dripping from his elbows. In addition to the heat, bees and wasps hung around the set, attacking anybody that opened up a can of Coke. Most of the crew drank water.

All new costumes, sets and monsters were created for the reworked series, but little else has changed from the original—



The new and improved Ultrahelmet.



Monster designer Kevin Hudson clowns around on the set of *Ultraman: The Ultimate Hero*.

into English, retitled *Ultraman* and imported to the United States.

Though Ultraman's popularity never reached the peak Stateside that it did in Japan, Ultraman is alive and well in Los Angeles and enjoying a new series entitled *Ultraman: The Ultimate Hero*, which will be syndicated nationally in mid-1994.

FILM THREAT went to the set of *Ultraman* and got a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the series, which stars Harrison Page, Robyn Bliley, Roby Roy Fitzgerald, Sandra Quibord and Kane Kosugi as members of the Worldwide Investigative Network Response team—Ultraman's allies on Earth who help him save it

just updated for the '90s. Creature creator Kevin Hudson was kept busy developing four different Ultraman masks, each with its own special features, such as an intercom system and illuminated eyes. The cost of each Ultraman costume was around \$7,000, with some of the bigger ultramonsters, such as Zambora and Gomora, costing upwards of \$14,000. That's a lot of money for a big rubber costume.

Will a giant superhero in a flashy red suit catch the zeitgeist of America's TV viewing public? Only if the couch potato monsters let the hero grow.

The man in the metallic rubber suit, Ultraman.